

REMARKS

This Amendment resubmits the Amendment previously filed March 18, 2003 which was filed with an RCE. The February 13, 2004 Office Action submits that the March 18, 2003 Amendment was filed improperly without a complete listing of all claims. In fact, the March 18, 2003 Amendment was filed under the old format which was in existence at that time. The newest format for claim amendments did not begin until June 30, 2003, and thus three months after the March 18, 2003 Amendment was filed. While it is submitted that the applicants should not have been forced to refile this Amendment, the Amendment is being refilled in an effort to move the prosecution of this application forward.

In the Final Office Action mailed October 18, 2002 the Examiner indicated that claims 1-10 are pending in the application. The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 6 while objecting to claims 2-5 and 7-10. An RCE, a Petition for a two-month extension of time and this Preliminary Amendment are being filed herewith. By the Preliminary Amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Thus claims 1-10 remain pending in the application. The Examiner's rejection is traversed below.

The Rejection

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 6 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,644,687 to Agonafer.

In the response to the prior Office Action the applicants had urged that Agonafer does not convert a printed circuit board into one or more models based on attributes preliminarily added to the component. On pages 3 and 4 of the current Office Action the Examiner has responded to the applicants prior patentability arguments. The Examiner has taken the position that the term "converting" can suggest more than converting per se, even though the reference uses the term to describe the functioning that is being performed. A broadest reasonable interpretation of the claimed subject matter suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art that the functioning is merely to convert or transform or otherwise manipulate data describing a PCB into one or more models."

Claims 1 and 6 Patentably Distinguish Over the Prior Art

In view of the Examiner's comments regarding the term "converting" applicants have amended claim 1 to recited:

"a converter converting the printed circuit board into one or more models based on attributes preliminarily added to the component, by disassembling the printed circuit board, according to the attributes, into one or more constitutional elements to be converted into the models."

It is submitted that this claim amendment is supported by the specification. For example, see page 5, lines 12-15 of the specification.

In view of the clarifying language added to claim 1, it is submitted that claim 1 even more clearly distinguishes over the Agonafer reference.

Referring to claim 6, this claim has been amended to recite:

"converting the printed circuit board into one or more models based on attributes preliminarily added to the component, by disassembling the printed circuit board, according to the attributes, into one or more constitutional elements to be converted into the models."

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 6 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Claims 2-5 and 7-10

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 2-5 and 7-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2-5 and 7-10 depend, directly or indirectly, from either claim 1 or claim 6 and include all of the features of the claim from which they depend, plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 2-5 and 7-10 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Summary

It is submitted that none of the references, either taken alone or in combination, teach the present claimed invention. Thus, claims 1-10 are deemed to be in a position suitable for

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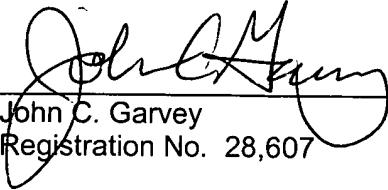
allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 3-15-04

By:


John C. Garvey
Registration No. 28,607

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1500